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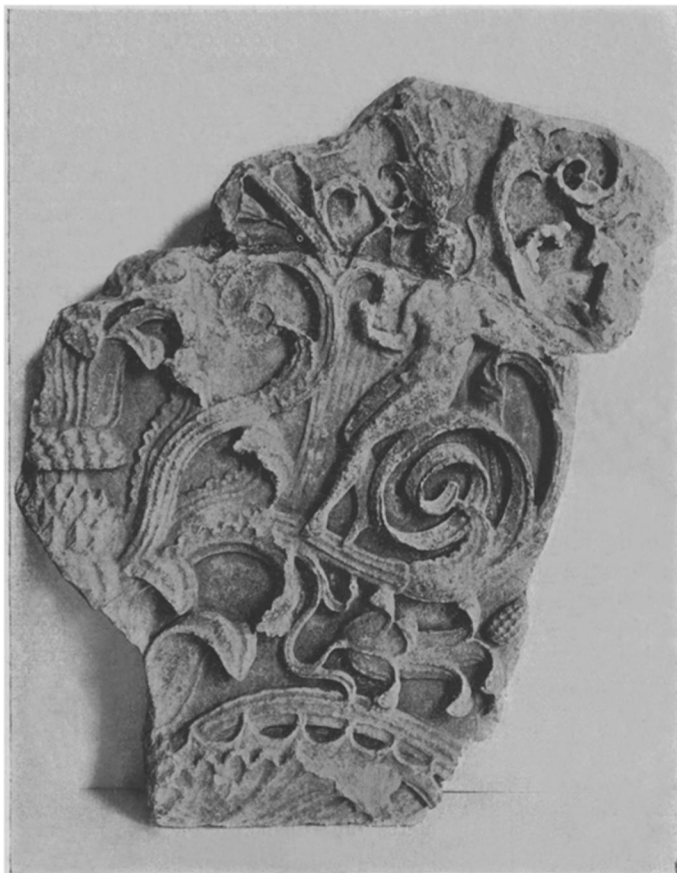
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Decorative Relief, Limestone

Fourth Century B. C.

Recent Additions to the Classical Collections

I. SCULPTURE

THE acquisition of such a masterpiece as the head of a goddess from Chios, which the Museum owes to the generosity of the late Nathaniel Thayer (Bulletin No. 44), would in itself suffice to make the year 1910 a memorable one in the recent history of the Classical Department. Attention has also been called in the Bulletin (No. 48) to the statuettes of a boar and lion which must be ranked high in our collection of Greek bronzes. The two works of decorative sculpture here reproduced were acquired in the same year, but have only recently been placed on exhibition.

The first is a fragmentary slab of soft white limestone upon which an elaborate "arabesque" design is carved in relief.* The inclination of the upper surface, a small part of which is preserved, suggests that the composition may have decorated the pediment of a small building. A portion of the central motive appears at the left. It is a large plant rising from acanthus leaves. Three thick, fluted stalks spread over the field to the right; from them issue leaves, blossoms, and spirally curled tendrils. On one of these a figure of Eros is lightly poised, his long wings spread out against the background. He is looking over his shoulder towards a griffin which emerges from the foliage at the right.

This relief is without close parallels in Greek sculpture, but it has been aptly compared with the floral designs on South Italian vases, especially those occurring on the necks of several large Apulian amphoras. The resemblance can be studied in the Museum on one of the finest examples of this class — the amphora with the representation of the death of Thersites, exhibited in the Fourth Century Room. It is interesting to note that the relief and the vase were both found at Ceglie, near Bari, in Southern Italy. On the front of the amphora the floral design is subordinated to a representation of Helios in his chariot emerging from the sea. On the back a figure of Eros, remarkably similar to the one on the relief, occupies the centre of the composition. Some examples of this motive show a large female head growing out of the central plant,† and it has been suggested that the present relief may have borne such a head. Though these vase paintings are carelessly executed, the close correspondence of the details of the floral design — as, for example, the rendering of the tendrils from an oblique point of view — is evident and

*Published by Petersen, *Archaeologia Augustae*, I., p. 163, Fig. 53.

†Compare a dish in Case 16 and an oinchoe in Case 17 in the Second Greek Vase Room.



Marble Relief

Graeco-Roman

helps to date the relief in the period of the Apulian vases, that is, in the fourth century B.C. The representation of Eros as a full-grown youth points to the same date, and the tendency towards the imitation of actual forms of plant life, very apparent here, is quite in the spirit of the time. The development in this direction can be clearly grasped if one compares the marble gravestone from the Troad in the Archaic Room, a work of about 500 B.C., with the anthemion from an Attic grave monument in the Fourth Century Room. The former has a crowning member composed of the highly conventionalized linear designs — spirals, palmettes, the lotus, which the Greeks took over from Oriental art. In the latter the palmette, become almost a real palm leaf, rises from acanthus leaves, fluted stalks, and tendrils. The appearance of the Corinthian capital and of the foliated scroll as a decoration for the simas of temples — as at Tegea, Epidauros, and Nemea — are illustrations of the same tendency. The relief under discussion is in its turn to be regarded as the forerunner of the elaborate arabesques of the Roman imperial age, of which the splendid sculptures of the *Ara Pacis* are the most famous examples. The griffins with tails merging into scrolls of acanthus, which appear on two panels shown at the east end of the Graeco-Roman Gallery, also illustrate this type of ornament. Such Roman works in their turn served as models for the decorative reliefs of the Renaissance.

In the historical development of classical design this work thus forms an interesting document. But aside from this, and in spite of its fragmentary condition and the dingy tone which its surface has assumed, it has a distinct artistic worth because of its skillful composition and the unusually fresh and vigorous spirit of the carving. It has been placed on exhibition in the Late Greek Room.

The second work, a fragment of white, translucent marble with the lower half of a female figure in high relief, is shown in the Graeco-Roman Gallery. It seems to have formed a part of a large base, or altar, of polygonal shape, judging by the thin plinth at the bottom which ends in a curve at the right side and is cut off at an obtuse angle at the left. The figure stands in profile to the right, her weight borne by the right leg, the left foot drawn back. Her hands were raised and probably held out the garland of which the lower end hangs before her. She wears the long Ionic dress, its texture indicated by crinkled lines, and over it the woolen Doric peplos reaching to the ankles, the upper part being doubled to form a *diploidion* which hangs in elaborate folds to below the waist.

This is an example of the large class of Graeco-Roman decorative reliefs in which the types of the great art of the past are reflected with varying degrees of faithfulness and consistency. The term archaistic describes them all, but is applied especially to imitations of the archaic style for which there was a great demand. This tendency is shown here in the treatment of the *diploidion* with its rigid lines and symmetrically arranged folds, while the free attitude of the left leg belongs to a slightly later period, and the garland of ivy leaves and berries is purely Roman. These varying elements are, however, combined to form a decidedly pleasing composition, and the execution is of such a fine quality as to raise the relief far above the average of the works of its class.

II. VASES

The interest of Athenian red-figured pottery of the first half of the fifth century usually lies not so



Sphinx

Design from a Kylix

*Ass Carrying a Bale of Goods**Fragmentary Kylix*

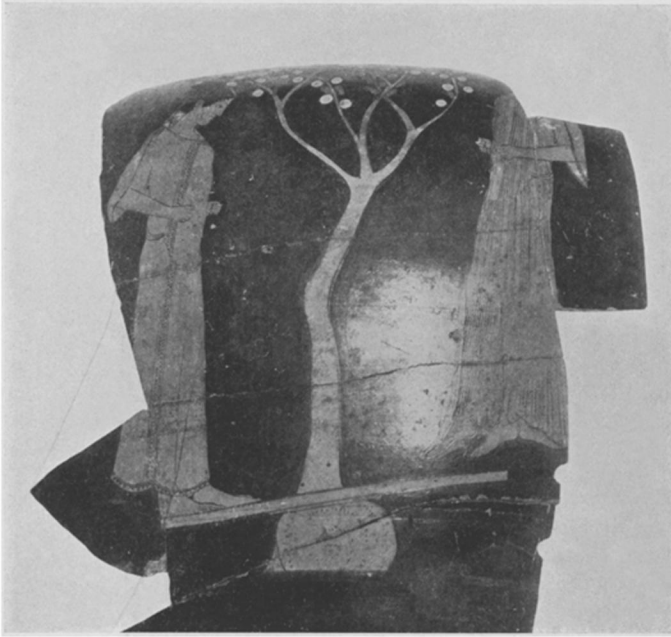
much in the vases themselves as in the figures or scenes with which they are decorated. A small sherd with a bit of drawing in the finest style may be more precious than a complete vase decorated by a less skillful craftsman. So the fifty-three pieces of pottery acquired in 1910 constitute an important addition to the Museum's collection of Greek vases in spite of the fact that four-fifths of them are incomplete and some are mere fragments. The majority are cups of the large shallow type known as a kylix, with drawings in the severe red-figured manner; not a few are published and well-known pieces, ascribed to such painters as Epiktetos and Epilykos (2), Euphronios (3), Peithinos, Douris and Brygos (5). Many of these are not adapted to photographic reproduction, and all must be seen in the original to be properly appreciated. But the examples illustrated here will give some idea of the interest of the series.

The first is the picture from the centre of a small kylix of exceptionally fine technique. Within a narrow circular border is the representation of a seated sphinx. Both the circle and the figure ap-

pear in the natural color of the clay against the lustrous black varnish. The details of the drawing are done in fine lines of the same varnish, while the outline of the hair is incised, and a wreath is added in a dull purple paint. The simple border, the use of the incised outline, the style of the drawing, and the signature *Ἐπὶ λυκος καλῶς*,—"Epilykos (made me) well,"—place the fragment in the earliest group of red-figured vases. The sphinx, a type borrowed from the Orient and most popular in Greek art of the sixth century, has by this time lost much of its original significance as a protecting demon, and is merely a decorative composition skillfully adapted to the circular field.

The animal on the second fragment is done in quite a different spirit. It is the central portion of a larger kylix of somewhat later date, the exterior of which was left undecorated. In the interior, within a circular border composed of a meander, a she-ass is shown pacing to the left carrying a bale of goods on a pack saddle.* This figure is surely to be classed among the masterpieces of animal

* Published by Hartwig, *Meisterschalen*, p. 563. Pl. LXIII., 1.

*See-Saw**Fragment of a Jar*

portraiture. Though it is done by the simplest possible means, no essential detail is lacking. The long ears, the tufted tail, the scanty mane, the long back streak across the shoulder, and the bars on the legs are all correctly observed and rendered. But it is rather the line of the back, the poise of the head, and the sidelong glance of the eye that give the character of the beast. The accessories are drawn with equal care. The bridle is decorated at the bottom with a fringe, as often nowadays in Italy and Greece. The halter is tied to one of the uprights of the saddle. This is a wooden framework fastened by three girths over a fringed saddle-cloth. Two stout ropes, one tied to the tail, the other passing around the animal's chest, serve to hold the burden in place. For those who have seen goods carried in this manner over the mountain passes of Greece, and have had

*Fragment of a Kylix*

painful experience of wooden saddles of similar construction, this vase painting possesses additional interest, as showing once again how little the external conditions of life have changed in that country during the last twenty-four hundred years.

The next illustration shows an equally unusual scene painted on a fragment of a large jar, perhaps of the type known as a stamnos. In front of a fruit tree a board laid across a large log serves as a see-saw for two girls. The spirit of the action is very successfully caught, and the whole forms a graceful composition.

There is no lack of the commoner types of decoration. A fragment from the interior of an early kylix by Euphronios shows a warrior in full armor and an archer in Asiatic garb kneeling side by side.* On the interior of another kylix is a splendid standing figure of an armed youth, while on the outside a num-

ber of youths are drawn in a variety of charming poses putting on their armor. A fragmentary psykter, or wine-cooler, contains a mythological scene in the severe style,—Pentheus torn to pieces by Maenads.† A fine skyphos, in the style of Brygos, fortunately intact, is decorated with athletes practising the broad jump under the direction of their trainers. Such athletic scenes occur with great frequency on the vases of this period. On the small fragment illustrated below a momentary pose, observed in some Athenian gymnasium, has been skillfully used to form the interior design of a kylix. A naked youth stoops over a large bath basin set on a pedestal in the form of an Ionic column. With his right hand he is testing the temperature of the water; his left hand holds a pitcher with which he is dipping up additional hot water from a bowl on the ground.

These fragments have been placed on exhibition in their chronological places in the series of Greek vases shown in the ground floor rooms devoted to the collection. L. D. C.

The Work of the Harvard University— Museum of Fine Arts Egyptian Expedition

1. PYRAMID OF ZAWIET-EL-ARYAN

THE great pyramids of Giza form only one group in the series of royal cemeteries which extend from Abu Roash to the Fayyum. Each site is marked by pyramids or the ruins of pyramids. The third site from the north is that of Zawiet-el-Aryan. When the expedition first examined

* Hartwig, *Meisterschalen*, p. 107, Pl. X.

† Hartwig, *Jahrbuch des k. d. arch. Inst.* VII., 1892, p. 153, Pl. V.